Pledge preparations in Finland's marine environment

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Penina Blankett, Ministry of the Environment
Lasse Kurvinen, Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland
Liisa Nevalainen, Ministry of the Environment
Markku Viitasalo, Syke, Finnish Environment Institute
Maija Häggblom, Ålands landskapsregering
Charlotta Björklund, Ålands landskapsregering
Outi Ala-Honkola, Ministry of the Environment

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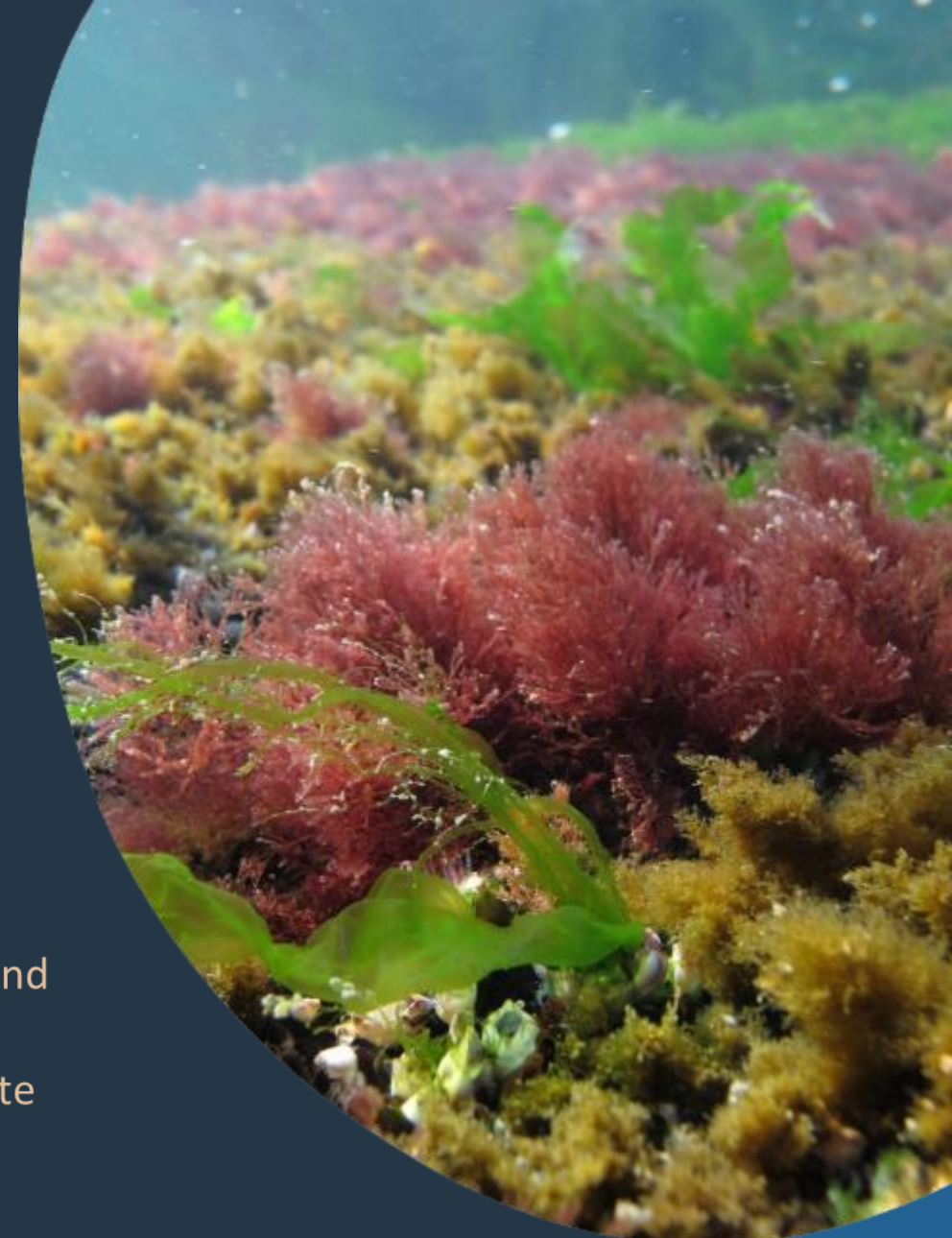Miljöministeriet
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Photo: Mats Westerbom & Julia Nyström, Metsähallitus

Finland's biodiversity pledge preparations

- Finland's pledge preparations started last year with a nomination of a broad-based high level steering group and a working group that both met several times in 2022.

- Steering group members were representatives of for example different ministries, nature conservation NGOs, fisheries, from 28 different organisations in total.

- Working group consisted of public officials, experts and stakeholder representatives, 20 people in total. The working group met 14 times last year.

- Expert groups prepared extensive material for the working group regarding the current state of Finland's MPA network as well estimate of for which species/habitats conservation status/trend could be improved by 2030 if all possible measures were taken.

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Finland's biodiversity pledge preparations

- At the end of 2022 the steering group came into the conclusion that a political decision needs to made about the content of the pledges.

- Finland's pledge preparations were delayed due to our parliamentary elections in the beginning of 2023.

- Ministry of the Environment has continued the technical preparation of pledges (filling measures in excel sheets) with the help of SYKE (Finnish Environment Institute) and Metsähallitus.

- Stakeholders have been met twice this year.

- Political negotiations about the content of the pledges are ongoing in the new government.

- **Government resolution about the content of the pledges will be made in early 2024.**

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Pledge 1: MPA network in Finland

Photo: Mats Westerbom, Metsähallitus

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Finnish inventory programme for underwater marine diversity =

From 2004:
170.000+ observations of species and habitats

- Diving lines
- "Drop Videos"
- Benthic samples
- Fish larvae samples
- Echo sounding
- Remote sensing
- Species distribution modeling
- Environmental variable models

Louise Forsblom, Syke

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2004
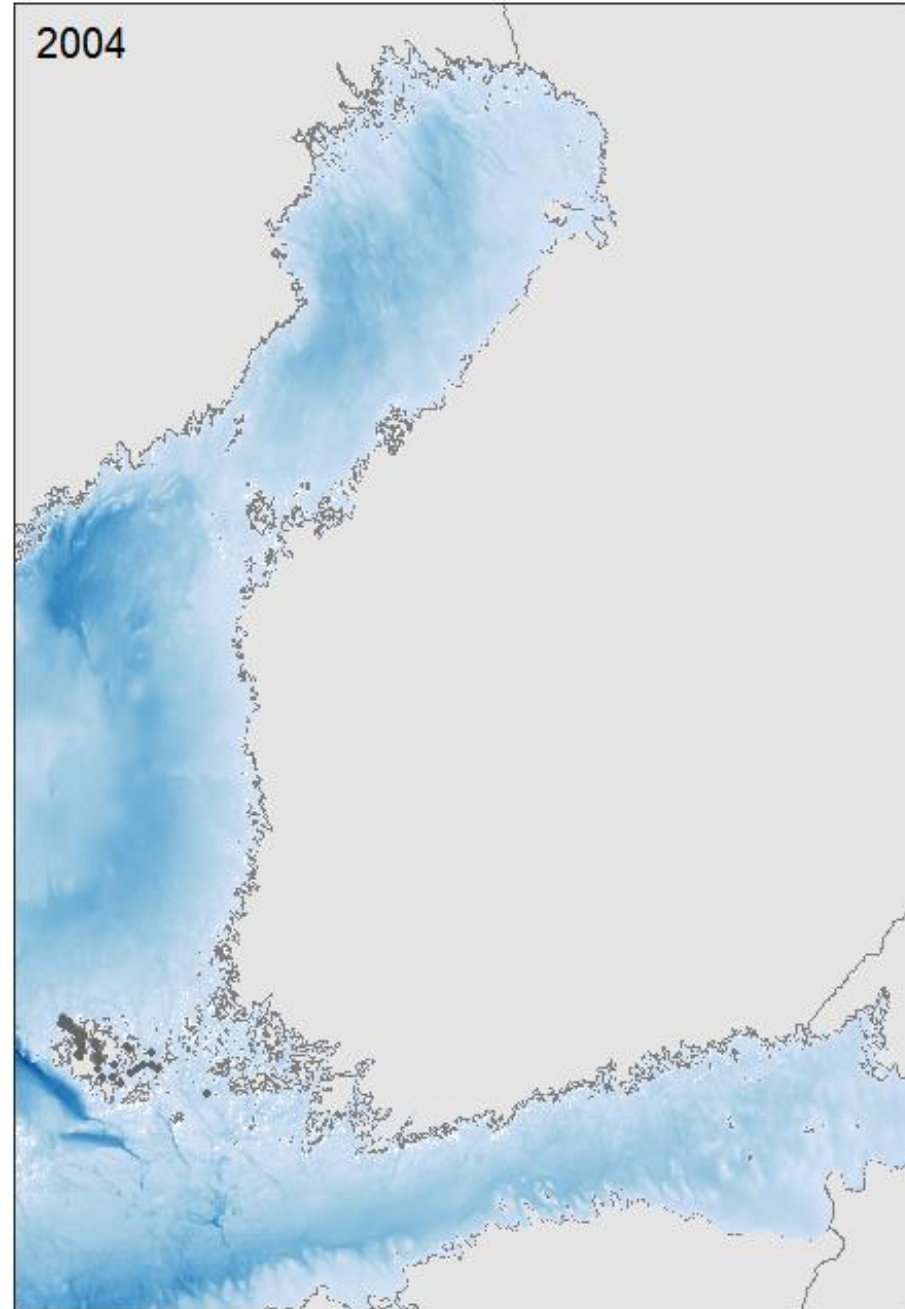
Systematic conservation planning (Zonation) used to locate the most valuable unprotected areas

- In 2018: Only 27% of the ecologically most valuable features were covered by the current MPA network. (Virtanen et al. 2018).

➢ Now the analysis has been renewed with updated species and habitat data (170.000 observations), models for 212 species, 8 marine habitats, and 22 pressure layers.

➢ **Indicates where new protected areas should be placed for effective protection**

Conservation priority map

Virtanen et al. 2018, Front. Mar. Sci. 5
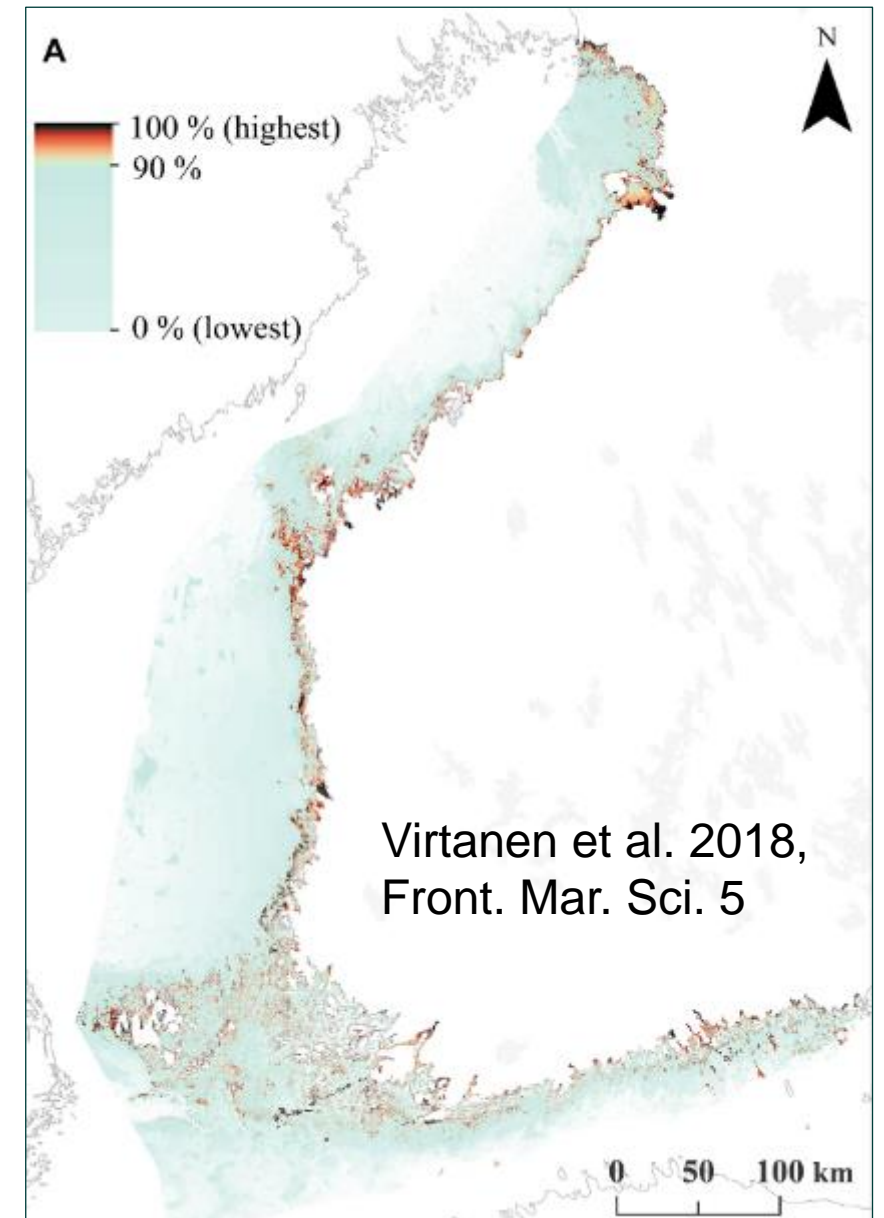
Next steps: Suggestion for areal (ha) shares and placement of new protection:

1. What will be the shares of new protection areas in sea areas owned by (*i*) the state, (*ii*) municipalities, and (*iii*) private land-owners?

2. How much do the areas identified as OECM's cover?

3. Which of the proposed areas should be proposed to be strictly protected?

Photo: Pekka Lehtonen, Metsähallitus

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State owned waters

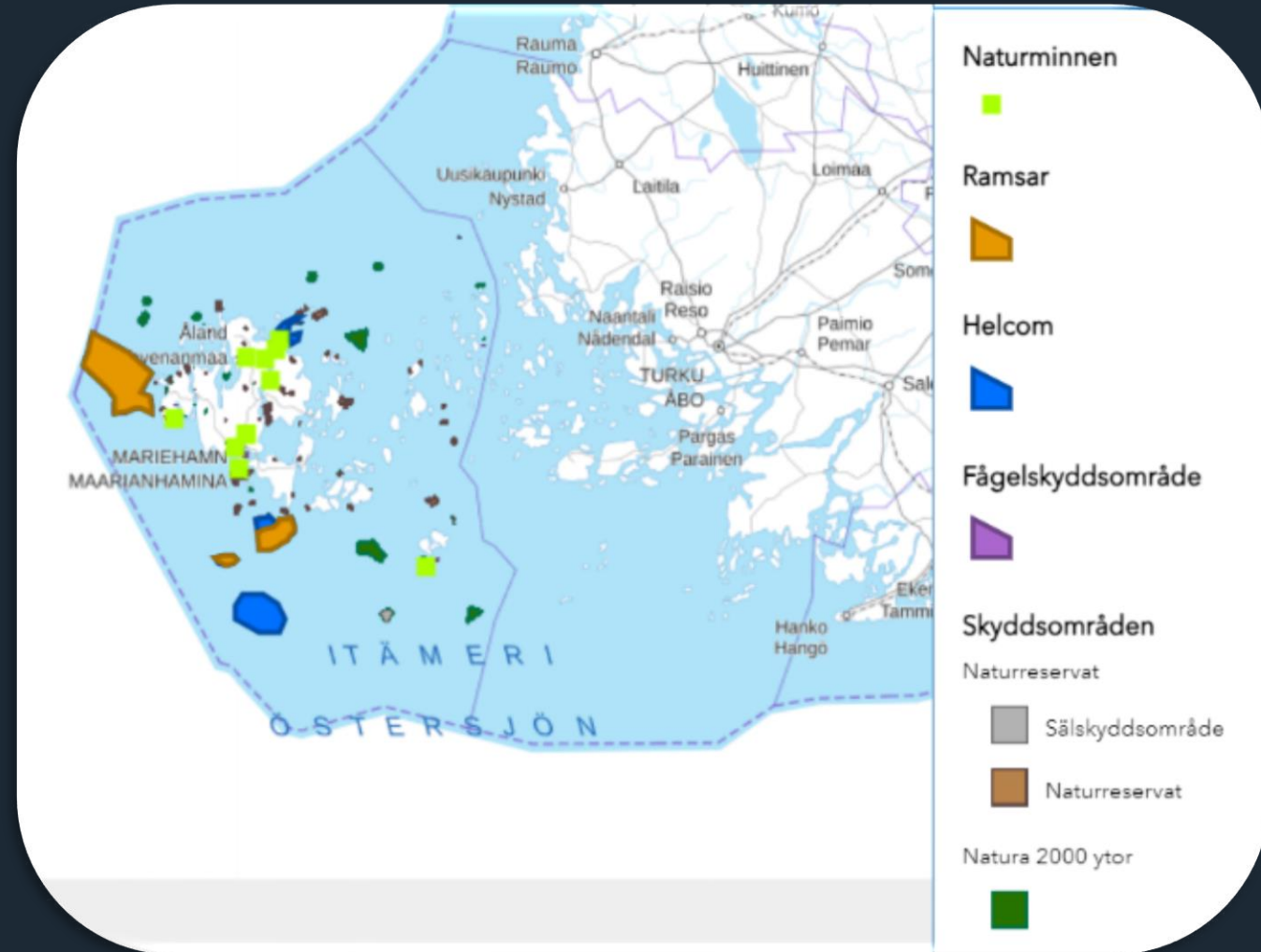Where are the most valuable unprotected biodiversity hotspot areas?

We need protection of privately owned areas!
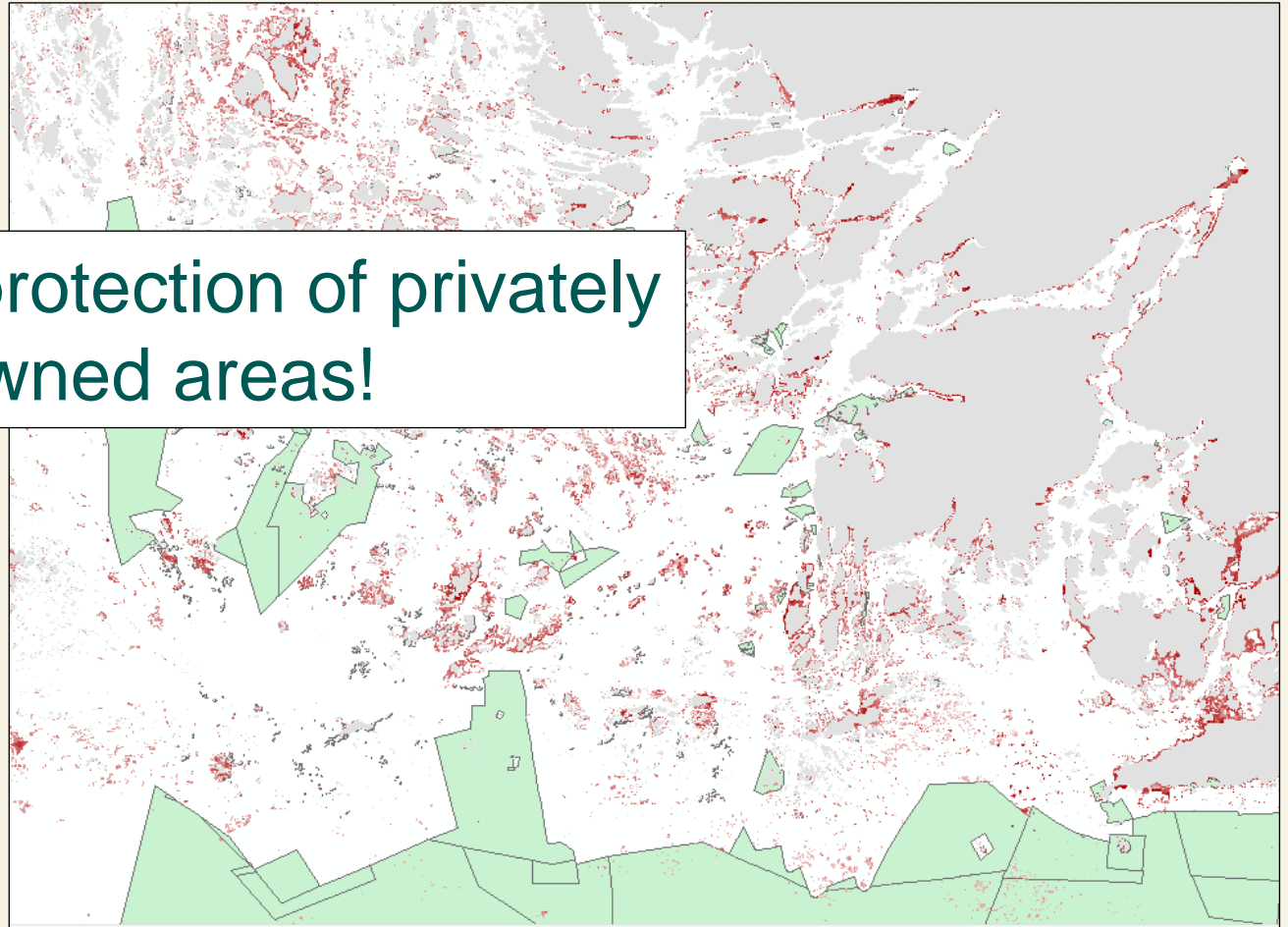
The MPA network in Åland

Tomorrow more on this!

Issues:

- **Eutrophication affects biodiversity!**

- Areal conservation measures need to be complemented by watershed measures (WPD, MSFD, Helcom)

- **Conflicting interests over marine use**

- Increasing offshore wind power: needs to be reconciled with 30 by 30

- Large fraction of the high biodiversity areas are owned by private land-owners: to how much private protection Finland can commit to?

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Photo: Karl Weckström, Metsähallitus

Summary: Goals

- **Identify sea areas that bring most of the biodiversity value under protection**

- **Identify pressures threatening the habitats and species, and eliminate them via effective MPA management and watershed measures**

- **Monitor the effectiveness of the protection, and adjust the measures accordingly (novel biodiversity monitoring planned in the BIODIVERSEA LIFE IP project)**

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Photo: Metsähallitus

Summary

- Finland has excellent species and habitat data from national Velmu programme

- The base material (Zonation analysis) is ready

- The estimation of hectares needed for effective protection in the Finnish sea area will be ready in 2023

- A detailed roadmap for development of a coherent MPA network in Finland's marine area will be done in the Biodiversea Life IP project during 2024-25

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Photo: Anu Riihimäki, Metsähallitus

Thank you!

Photo: Julia Nyström, Metsähallitus

Contact information:

Penina Blankett Penina.blankett@gov.fi

Lasse Kurvinen lasse.kurvinen@metsa.fi

Liisa Nevalainen Liisa.nevalainen@gov.fi

Maija Häggblom maija.haggblom@regeringen.ax

Charlotta Björklund charlotta.bjorklund@regeringen.ax
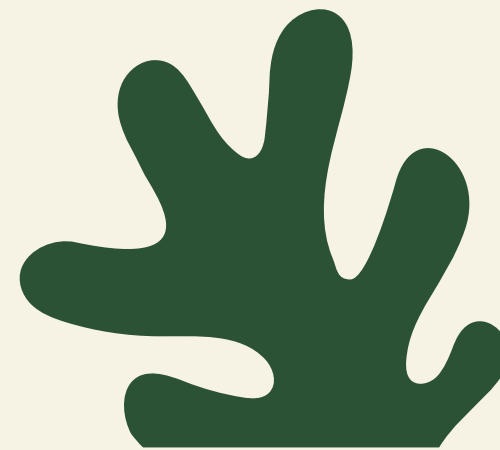
Markku Viitasalo markku.viitasalo@syke.fi

Outi Ala-Honkola outi.ala-honkola@gov.fi

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Aleksanterinkatu 7, Helsinki | PL 35, FI-00023 Valtioneuvosto | ym.fi

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